

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 08890 031836Z

12

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2463

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 8890

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, CH, IN

SUBJECT: US MAPS OF SINO-INDIAN BORDER

REF: STATE 142935

1. INDIANS, AS THE DEPARTMENT IS WELL AWARE, ARE SENSITIVE ABOUT THEIR BORDERS. AS AND WHEN THE PRC BACKGROUND NOTES COME TO THEIR ATTENTION, THEY WILL OBSERVE THAT BOTH INDIAN AND CHINESE CLAIM LINES ARE NOW SHOWN. THEY MAY NOT DRAW ANY IMMEDIATE CONCLUSIONS THAT THIS REPRESENTS A CHANGE IN US POLICY, BUT THE RISK IS THERE AND HIGHLY CRITICAL QUESTIONS MAY BE RAISED IN PARLIAMENT.

2. THE INDIANS MAY WELL BE THINKING OF EVENTUALLY RESOLVING THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE CHINESE ALONG THE BORDER IN TERMS OF ACCEPTING THE STATUS QUO, BUT NEGOTIATIONS ARE STILL QUITE A WHILE OFF GIVEN CURRENT SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS. THE INDIANS WILL NOT WELCOME US CARTOGRAPHIC CHANGES WHICH APPEAR TO UNDERCUT THEIR BARGAINING POSITION, EVEN IF THEIR EVENTUAL FALLBACK MAY BE TO PRECISELY THE POINT WE ARE THINKING OF MOVING TO. WE HAVE A NUMBER OF OTHER PROBLEMS ACCUMULATING INVOLVING INDIA. DO WE NEED TO ADD CARTOGRAPHY TO THESE AT THIS POINT? IF THE CHINESE ARE GOING TO BE DISSATISFIED WITH OUR MAP IN ANY EVENT BECAUSE OF THE BORDERS SHOWN ON THE EAST

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 08890 031836Z

AND IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, DO WE REALLY GAIN MUCH BY TAKING

THE INITIATIVE TO CHANGE OUR HANDLING OF THE SINO-INDIAN BORDER?
MIGHT IT NOT BE BETTER TO WAIT UNTIL THE CHINESE GRUMBLE AND
AT LEAST HAVE SOME POINTS WE CAN CONCEDE ON RATHER THAN PUT
OUR FINAL POSITION ONTO THE MAP AT THIS TIME?

3. NEVERTHELESS, IF THE MAP CHANGE DESCRIBED IN REFTTEL IS
MADE AND THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT RAISES THE ISSUE, WE BELIEVE WE
CAN PROBABLY LIVE WITH A RATIONALE WHICH ARGUES THAT THE BORDER
IS IN FACT UNDETERMINED, THAT THE CHINESE DE FACTO OCCUPY THE
AKSAI CHIN, AND THAT BY SHOWING BOTH BORDER CLAIMS THE USG IS
NOT MAKING A JUDGMENT ON THE MERITS OF THE QUESTION. OTHER
ASPECTS OF THE MAP POSE NO PROBLEMS TO US.

4. THE PROBLEM WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY MORE DIFFICULT IF WE
ARE ASKED TO CONCUR IN DROPPING ANY RPT ANY REFERENCE TO THE
INDIAN CLAIM LINE ON FUTURE MAPS. THE EMBASSY WOULD HOPE TO
HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A MOVE
MORE CAREFULLY BEFORE IT IS TAKEN.
SCHNEIDER

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